



# NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Speaker Ben Toma (R-27)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

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Friday, December 8, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Arizona House Republicans Condemn President Biden's Closure of Lukeville Port of Entry, Refusal to Defend State from Border Crisis

**STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX** – Arizona House Republicans sent a letter to President Joe Biden today condemning his decision to close the U.S. Port of Entry in Lukeville—just another failure in a long disastrous record of mishandling the border crisis which is hurting the communities and people in our state.

*As leaders of the state of Arizona, our top priority is and has always been the safety and welfare of our citizens. We have repeatedly denounced the crisis at our southern border and stated what should be obvious: the smuggling of illegal drugs, weapons, and human beings poses a direct threat to our communities and innocent Americans.*

*Yet your administration has reacted to this humanitarian crisis—largely one of your administration's own making—with complete inaction, neglect, and ineffective immigration policies. Border wall materials that could have been used to keep our communities safe have instead sat in the southwest desert for years. Encounters at the Southwest border in FY2023 increased **over 40%** since FY2021.*

*As the President of our nation, you should be as alarmed as we are that in the past year, **169 migrants on the terrorist watch list** tried to cross the southern border into our country. But imagine how many have crossed and not been caught by law enforcement. And, in the same time period, **more than 24,000 Chinese nationals** were apprehended crossing into the United States from Mexico, as the world's tensions with communist China intensify. Looking at those crossing the border in droves, they are largely military-aged men, not families in search of a better life as Democrats continually claim. Your open-border approach to immigration is a national threat that will have disastrous impacts on the entire country.*

*Border states in particular are significantly harmed by your administration's failed policies every day. Our law enforcement agencies at the border are overextended. Healthcare providers in border communities are overworked to such an extent that they are struggling to provide essential services to the residents of their community in need of care.*

*Your decision to close the Lukeville Port of Entry is just the latest in a long stream of irresponsible policies from your administration that fail to keep Arizona citizens, and all Americans, safe from criminal activity at the border. The closure has caused an immediate collapse of economic activity*

*and legal movement through that critical port of entry. Arizonans along the way to Lukeville will needlessly suffer as businesses shutter in communities such as Gila Bend, Ajo, and Why. Additionally, your proposed alternative routes to cross the border force Arizonans and Mexican nationals to travel through known cartel corridors, putting the lives of Americans at risk.*

*The decision to close the Lukeville Port of Entry as a solution to the crisis you created is unacceptable and must be reversed immediately. It is no secret why the border is overwhelmed. Your anti-American open-border policy sent a message to the world: that there will be no consequences for illegal immigration. The real solution is simple. Reverse your policy and put a halt to the wide-open door for so-called “asylum-seekers.”*

*After years of being on the front lines of the border disaster, the State of Arizona has picked up the slack of an impotent federal government to protect our citizens. We have funded initiatives to combat human trafficking and illegal entry into the United States as well as border infrastructure, local prosecution efforts, and other necessary activities to safeguard citizens. We have demanded that the Arizona Governor and the Arizona Attorney General take executive action and hold you accountable in court to protect Arizona’s citizens and its sovereignty. Please make no mistake, Republican leaders in this state will continue to fight for the safety of our citizens and a humane and orderly border. We will hold you accountable for your refusal to protect this nation and its people.*

A copy of the caucus letter signed by all 31 House Republican members is attached below.

House Speaker Ben Toma added that House Republicans will continue to lead where others refuse: **“Securing the border is supposed to be the federal government’s job. But the willful inaction by President Biden is causing irreparable harm. Arizona’s Democratic leaders, Governor Hobbs and Attorney General Mayes, also ignore calls to defend the state and hold the federal government accountable. When Republicans in the Legislature specifically funded a mission of the National Guard to provide support to law enforcement on the border, Governor Hobbs cut that mission short to instead aid the transportation and housing of illegal aliens. Arizonans can count on House Republicans to pursue meaningful policy and budgetary solutions in the upcoming legislative session to protect Arizona’s border, border communities, and the people we are elected to represent.”**

*Ben Toma is the Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives and serves Legislative District 27, which includes areas of Glendale, Peoria, and Phoenix. Follow him on X/Twitter at @RepBenToma.*

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Arizona House of Representatives  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

December 7, 2023

Honorable President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

As leaders of the state of Arizona, our top priority is and has always been the safety and welfare of our citizens. We have repeatedly denounced the crisis at our southern border and stated what should be obvious: the smuggling of illegal drugs, weapons, and human beings poses a direct threat to our communities and innocent Americans.

Yet your administration has reacted to this humanitarian crisis—largely one of your administration's own making—with complete inaction, neglect, and ineffective immigration policies. Border wall materials that could have been used to keep our communities safe have instead sat in the southwest desert for years. Encounters at the Southwest border in FY2023 increased over 40% since FY2021.

As the President of our nation, you should be as alarmed as we are that in the past year, 169 migrants on the terrorist watch list tried to cross the southern border into our country. But imagine how many have crossed and not been caught by law enforcement. And, in the same time period, more than 24,000 Chinese nationals were apprehended crossing into the United States from Mexico, as the world's tensions with communist China intensify. Looking at those crossing the border in droves, they are largely military-aged men, not families in search of a better life as Democrats continually claim. Your open-border approach to immigration is a national threat that will have disastrous impacts on the entire country.

Border states in particular are significantly harmed by your administration's failed policies every day. Our law enforcement agencies at the border are overextended. Healthcare providers in border communities are overworked to such an extent that they are struggling to provide essential services to the residents of their community in need of care.

Your decision to close the Lukeville Port of Entry is just the latest in a long stream of irresponsible policies from your administration that fail to keep Arizona citizens, and all Americans, safe from criminal activity at the border. The closure has caused an immediate

President Joseph R. Biden

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Page 2

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The decision to close the Lukeville Port of Entry as a solution to the crisis you created is unacceptable and must be reversed immediately. It is no secret why the border is overwhelmed. Your anti-American open-border policy sent a message to the world: that there will be no consequences for illegal immigration. The real solution is simple. Reverse your policy and put a halt to the wide-open door for so-called "asylum-seekers."

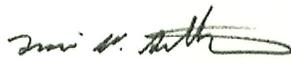
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Sincerely,

Members of the Arizona House Republican Caucus



Ben Toma  
Representative, LD27  
Speaker



Travis Grantham  
Representative, LD14  
Speaker Pro Tempore



Justin Wilmeth  
Representative, LD2



Matt Gress  
Representative, LD4



Leo Biasiucci  
Representative, LD30  
Majority Leader



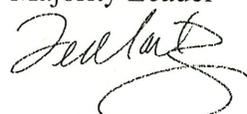
Selina Bliss  
Representative, LD1



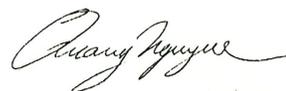
Joseph Chaplik  
Representative, LD3



David L. Cook  
Representative, LD7



Teresa Martínez  
Representative, LD16  
Majority Whip



Quang H. Nguyen  
Representative, LD1



Alexander Kolodin  
Representative, LD3



David Marshall, Sr.  
Representative, LD7



Barbara Parker  
Representative, LD10



Neal Carter  
Representative, LD 15



Michele Peña  
Representative, LD23



David Livingston  
Representative, LD28



Justin Heap  
Representative, LD10



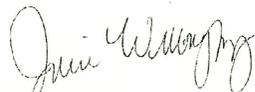
Cory McGarr  
Representative, LD17



Michael Carbone  
Representative, LD25



Austin Smith  
Representative, LD29



Julie Willoughby  
Representative, LD13



Rachel Jones  
Representative, LD17



Timothy M. Dunn  
Representative, LD25



Steve Montenegro  
Representative, LD29



Laurin Hendrix  
Representative, LD14



Gail Griffin  
Representative, LD19



Kevin Payne  
Representative, LD27



John Gillette  
Representative, LD30



Jaqueline Parker  
Representative, LD15



Lupe Diaz  
Representative, LD19



Beverly Pingerelli  
Representative, LD28